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winter. At all other times of the year, the clock and the sun vary in consequence of the earth's motion in declination, so that in the first and third quarters the clock is behind the sun-dial, and in the second and fourth it is before. The difference of these is a matter of easy calculation to any one acquainted with astronomy. It is called the equation of time.

From the motion of the earth round the sun in the course of the year, the sun appears to have a motion eastward among the stars, so as to get completely round the heavens, as from star to star, in the course of the year. This makes the year, counted by the stars, contain a day more than the year counted by the sun, the first being called the sidereal year, and the second the tropical. It is by the tropical year that we count time; and at present the tropical year contains three hundred and sixty-five days, five hours, forty-eight minutes, and forty-nine seconds. This odd time is less than a quarter of a day by eleven minutes and eleven seconds; and thus it will not count exactly in days, or any part of a day. It is, however, very nearly a quarter of a day; and thus, in our estimate of the year, so as to get it expressed in an exact number of days, we take no notice of this fraction for three years, but reckon the year for these as consisting exactly of three hundred and sixty-five days; and in order to make the seasons in our calculation keep to the season in the estimate, we allow the fraction to accumulate, and reckon every fourth year a day more, or three hundred and sixty-six days, by which means we get an odd day, or a twenty-ninth day of February every fourth year; nor are we at any loss to find out the year in which this is the case, for whenever the date, or number of the year, can be divided by four without any remainder, it will be leap year; thus, 1832 was a leap year, 1836 is a leap year, 1840 will be a leap year, and so on.

This allowance is too much, however, and the difference amounts to rather less than a day in a hundred years, or very nearly to seven days in nine hundred years. The calendar, reckoning three hundred and sixty-five days every year, and three hundred and sixty-six every fourth year, was established by Julius Cæsar; but as it made the year by account the odd minutes and seconds longer than the true year, the seasons got in advance of their estimated times according to the calendar. This was rectified in 1582 by Pope Gregory XIII., who directed that the fifteenth day of October that year should immediately follow the fourth day, thus leaving out eleven days. It was not till 1752 that the alteration was established by authority in England; and this was called the alteration from "old style" to "new style," the fourteenth of September coming immediately after the second in that year, instead of the third. Another important arrangement was made at the same time. Before then, it had been customary to reckon the 25th day of March as the first day of the year; but at that time it was changed to the 1st of January. In consequence of this change of the beginning of the year, we sometimes meet with dates which are marked double, the period between January and March having the number of both years attached to it, as belonging to the old year by the one estimate, and the new year by the other. The Russians continue to count time by the old style; and as there has been another day allowed for since our alteration, the difference between Russia and the rest of Europe is now twelve days; so that an English letter might arrive in Russia before the day on which it appeared to be written; and a letter brought from Russia to this country would be twelve days older than the time of bringing.

The day in four years, or the quarter of a day every year, is more than eleven minutes too much; and if we were not to make allowance for this, the error which was corrected by Pope Gregory would accumulate, and have to be corrected again. We contrive, however, to get nearly rid of it by leaving out the odd day in those centuries, the dates of which are divisible by four hundred, and which would contain three hundred and sixty-six days by the common estimate. This is so near the truth, that it does not amount to an entire day in three thousand years. If the years divisible by four thousand were also reckoned at three hundred and sixty-five days each, the error would not be a day in three thousand years.

THE HAUNTED PHYSICIANS.

A lover once, when love was more in fashion
Than it is now in these degenerate days,
When sickness on the object of his passion
Had laid a heavy hand—sought out all ways
From her sick couch his mistress dear to raise.
At length he came unto this wise decision,
To trust her valued life unto the best physician.

But where could he be found? Whilst thus he pondered,
An ancient man drew near, and him addressed;
"Thro' many a wild and wondrous land I've wandered,
But now I seek my home to be at rest.
Here is a talisman, which, when possess'd,
Gives one the power to see each airy spirit:
It shall be yours, if I may half your goods inherit."

No sooner said than done—the bargain over,
The old man took his goods, and bade adieu;
And to the first physician's house the lover,
With his prized talisman, all quickly flew;
But what a horrid sight there met his view;
Flocking around the door, he saw the spirits
Whose bodies had been killed by this physician's merits.

Old rev'rend men, with hair and beard all hoary,
Shaking their heads with anger and with age;
Young, dauntless youths, who might have lived with glory,
Had they escaped the first physician's rage;
Mothers, and grandmothers, and infants crying,
'Gainst him who lived by other people's dying.

A while our lover stood, amazed, astounded,
Unable to proceed, yet loth to stay;
When, lo! forth came the doctor, unconfounded,
And through the ghostly patients made his way,
Calm and unmoved at all their sad array.
Our lover wondered more, but on he hastened,
For time was precious, and could not be wasted.

But at each eminent physician's house he
Saw spirits muster, either less or more;
So that, quite frightened, his intended spouse he
Would not deliver to their clutches o'er;
With grief and anguish his sad heart was sore.
He wandered quite bewildered through the city,
Peering at every doctor's house in hopes of pity.

At last, oh, ecstasy! oh, blissful vision!
He saw a door where but two small ghosts stood;
Behold, he cried with joy, the great physician,
Whom long I sought for, but I never could
Succeed till now in making my search good.
The doctor, quite surprised, said, "Pray don't scout, Sir,
But tell me how you e'er contrived to make me out, Sir."

"Oh, learned Sir, your skill and reputation,"
Replied the lover, "are to me well known."
"My skill!" the doctor said, "I've held this station
But one short week; and candidly I own,
I've had but two small patients"—with a groan
The lover heard him thus his fond hopes mar,
And in despair exclaimed, "But two! and there they
are!" M. A. A.

Sponge-Diving.—In the Cyclades the male inhabitants are chiefly brought up to the business of sponge-diving. No young man is allowed to marry until he can descend with facility to a depth of twenty fathoms in the sea.

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